DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 398 617 EA 027 593

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TITLE Secondary School Subcultures and the Implementation of Nontraditional School Schedules.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 60p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Change; High Schools; Interaction; Interprofessional Relationship; Organizational Change; *Organizational Climate; Organizational Communication; Politics of Education; Program Implementation; *Resistance to Change; *School Culture; *School Schedules; *Subcultures; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Washington

ABSTRACT

Researchers who view schools as cultural organizations have tended to assume that they are monocultural entities. This paper presents a view of complex secondary schools as multicultural organizations. It discusses findings of a year-long study that examined the professional culture within two high schools in Washington State as each attempted to implement several reform objectives, including new master schedules. The study used the model of organizational subcultural analysis developed by Bloor and Dawson (1994) to identify and describe the subcultures and their various interactions throughout the year. Data sources included social artifacts, indepth interviews with at least half of the teaching and administrative staff in each school, and observation. The results suggest that the subcultural level, along with the individual and organizational levels, may also be critical for successful implementation of reform. There is a need for continuous "reframing" of a change according to the values of a specific professional subculture. The paper describes the ways in which different professional subcultures sought to strengthen their positions in order to realize their particular ideological visions. In most cases members of the less extreme, or "orthogonal" groups were most successful in this effort, serving as mediators between the dominant and dissenting subcultures. Finally, the findings brought to light the pain experienced by highly visionary reformers when their missions fail or are ridiculed. (Contains 49 references.) (LMI)

Secondary School Subcultures and the Implementation of Nontraditional School Schedules

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Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association

New York City, NY
April, 1996

SECONDARY SCHOOL SUBCULTURES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NONTRADITIONAL SCHOOL SCHEDULES

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Educational researchers and theorists who have viewed organizations culturally have contributed immeasurably to our understanding of change and reform attempts within schools (e.g., Louis, 1983; Sarason, 1982; Schein, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1991). However, one potential shortcoming of the organizational cultural perspective is its tacit assumption that schools are monocultural places (Gregory, 1983; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Bloor & Dawson, 1994) which are created, maintained, or altered as intact entities. The notable exception to this whole-cultural line of research has been the study of subject-discipline subcultures in schools (e.g., Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1994, 1995).

We prefer to view complex secondary schools as *multicultural* organizations and sought a better understanding of the reactions to reform through this multicultural lens. Such subcultural divisions may be related to, but not solely determined by teachers' disciplinary affiliations. In addition, we believe that the actions and reactions regarding organizational change are based on more than simplistic categorizations of people into "supportive of" or "resistant to" groups. Using this multicultural lens, we examined how two schools' overlapping and fluid professional subcultures reacted to and shaped attempts at several planned reforms -- key among them, the implementation of a nontraditional master schedule.

Specifically, we were intrigued by a model of professional subcultures described by Bloor and Dawson (1994). Although these authors utilize their theory to describe differing occupational groups within an organization, we applied their model *across* specific specialties (i.e., departments) and related the model to ways in which different professional subcultures made sense of and interrelated as they attempted to implement specific school reform goals. According to Bloor and Dawson, "Such a framework must show how professionals, individually and

collectively, make sense of and structure their worlds, and how organizational structures and practices in turn impinge upon professional understanding and action" (p. 281).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this year-long study was to describe and better understand the professional subcultures within two high schools in the State of Washington as each attempted to begin implementation of several reform objectives -- key among them, new master schedules. More specifically, we sought to examine 1) ways in which school staff, as members of overlapping subcultures, made sense of their experiences, and 2) how patterns of subcultural influence were formed and revised over the first year of the new schedules' implementation. We utilized the model of organizational subcultural analysis developed by Bloor and Dawson (1994) to identify and describe these subcultures and their various interactions throughout the year.

Restructuring attempts in secondary schools have often included reconceptualizing the variable of time as it relates to both curricular and instructional practices (Sizer, 1984; Carroll, 1990). These attempts essentially integrate changes in the school's master schedule as a supporting structural change for more systemic reform in both what is taught (changing the curriculum) and how teachers teach (pedagogical reform). Such changes would potentially affect different professional subcultures in different ways.

The results of this study will be of interest to those concerned with how proposed reforms may be received and implemented by educators in secondary schools. We hope that our case studies enrich the traditional cultural perspective on schools by describing how two high schools were, in reality, composed of several professional subcultures, each with its own perspective on and reaction to the implementation of a new schedule (and associated goals). We hope to better explicate reactions to proposed changes which are more helpful than just dividing a school's staff into categories based on "who supports" and "who resists" an innovation.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of culture is not new; it has been used by sociologists and anthropologists for most of this century. The application of cultural principles to the study of organizations has provided a valuable lens through which to explore and to make sense of many organizational phenomena. The current study was based on such a theoretical foundation.

What is Culture?

Culture is a term used to describe a multitude of collective social phenomena, and is often a polemical concept; however, there are several broad themes which characterize most definitions (Becker & Geer, 1970; Louis, 1983, 1985; Barley, 1983; Gregory, 1983; Smircich, 1983; Schein, 1985; Metz, 1987; Ott, 1989). A common denominator is the concept that a group's culture is based on a number of shared meanings or understandings and is so taken for granted that people sharing the culture rarely need to mention them.

Applying the concept of culture to an organization allows us to view other aspects in addition to the formal and the rational characteristics originally delineated in classical organizational theories. During the 1980s, such authors as Deal and Kennedy (Corporate Cultures, 1982) and Peters and Waterman (In Search of Excellence, 1982) popularized the application of cultural analysis to the understanding of organizations. Organizational culture researchers focused their attention on stories, myths, values, heroes, symbolism, language, the politics of life in the workplace, and the interpersonal dramas which give organizational life more "color" than can be seen by studying organizational charts or strategic plans. Louis (1983), for example, contends that "it is increasingly clear that much of what matters in organizational life takes place at the cultural level" (p. 43).

Ott (1989) contends that to regard organizations as cultures assumes that many human behaviors and decisions that transpire within organizations are based on -- and may be determined by -- patterns of basic assumptions which have dropped out of peoples' consciousness but continue to influence them, even when the organization's environment changes. These

assumptions "become the underlying, unquestioned -- but virtually forgotten -- reasons for 'the way we do things here,' even when the ways are no longer appropriate" (p. 3).

Louis (1983) believes that organizations are "culture-bearing milieux;" that is, they are contexts in which groups act out their common language, symbols, and ways of organizing behavior (e.g., what we're doing together in this particular group and appropriate ways of doing it) (p. 39). Louis sees organizations as "petri dishes" in which cultures can develop and flourish.

But how does an organization's culture develop? Bloor and Dawson (1994) suggest that a good starting point is to examine the process by which members of an organization make sense of organizational life. Certainly, people bring with them into organizations their own unique personalities, attributes, histories, and lifestyles. Within an organization, people interact with each other in different ways. Patterns of interaction usually develop over time, ultimately becoming shared knowledge which is used by organizational members to make sense of their experiences and provide a framework for future interpretation and decision making. This sense-making process is a complex, reciprocal interplay between the individual and the group; individuals rely heavily upon observing the behavior of others in group settings and upon the shared meanings others give to that behavior in order to make sense of what is going on.

Organizations as Multicultural Entities

A great deal of the research and reflection regarding organizations as cultures is based on the premise that an organization possesses a single culture, one that is pervasive throughout the organization (Louis, 1985). But some theorists refute this assumption (e.g., Gouldner, 1957; Gregory, 1983; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Rose, 1988; Becher, 1989; Bloor & Dawson, 1994). Gregory (1983) contends that many organizations are most accurately viewed as multicultural:

> Subgroups with different occupational, divisional, ethnic, or other cultures approach organizational interactions with their own meanings and sense of priorities. Ethnocentrism, the tendency to take for granted one's own cultural view and to evaluate others' behavior in terms of it, increases the tendency for misunderstandings and conflicts to occur. (pp. 359-360)

Bloor and Dawson (1994) suggest that, although it is empirically possible for an organization to exhibit a homogeneous culture, it is highly unlikely given the ongoing recruitment of new members, the changing nature of organizational technologies, and the probable existence of departmental and other group perspectives. In addition, individuals will usually hold simultaneous membership within several "nested" subcultures, some of which extend outside the organization. Even in the case where an individual is a lone professional within an organization, "participation in external professional activities, the reading of professional journals, the expectations of professional peers, are all likely to reinforce professional cultural values, even when they come into conflict with the organization's core culture" (Bloor & Dawson, p. 287).

VanMaanen and Barley (1984) contend that it is probable that differences between members of differing subcultures may lie dormant under "normal" conditions, but flare up into full-blown conflicts when stable conditions grow more turbulent.

> Once latent tensions between organizational subcultures are activated, the character and outcome of the ensuing conflict depends on a host of variables including the political clout that a group can muster, the number of opportunities to exercise such clout, and the conditions that shape each group's position vis-a-vis others in the organization. (VanMaanen & Barley, 1984, p. 49)

Bloor and Dawson concur that the study of organizational culture (and subcultures) is closely bound to the study of organizational conflict.

Bloor and Dawson conceptual framework. Of specific interest to the current study is a typology of organizational subcultures developed by Bloor and Dawson (1994). These authors based their typology on an earlier, more simplistic model described by Martin and Siehl (1983). In their study of professional subcultures within an Australian home-health care organization, and extending Martin's and Siehl's ideas, Bloor and Dawson describe the existence of six major types of subcultures:

1) the *dominant subculture*, whose value system is legitimized by the formal system;

2) an *enhancing subculture* which places great emphasis on maintaining work practices that support the dominant subculture;

3) an *orthogonal subculture* which accepts the basic assumptions of the dominant

subculture, but also holds some assumptions that are unique and in conflict with the dominant subculture;

4) a *dissenting subculture* which espouses philosophies often at odds with other groups and with the dominant subculture;

5) a *counterculture* which actively rejects the core values of the dominant subculture;

6) a *deferential subculture* which defers to and yet is remote from the dominant subculture.

Each of these subcultures and the interaction among them, Bloor and Dawson found, shape the overall organizational culture in a number of ways:

> The enhancing and deferential subcultures are both compatible with the organizational culture; with the latter it is through deference, and with the former it is through unquestioning support and advocacy of the "rightness" of the core assumptions, values and beliefs. In the case of dissenting subcultures, these were shown to challenge the existing dominant subculture and offer an alternative set of operating practices and values with the primary cultural system. . . . Finally, the more common orthogonal subculture was shown to act as a midway point between the enhancing and dissenting subcultures, and facilitate the development of new proposals and the redefinition of common elements without radically questioning the dominance of the (dominant) subculture. (p. 292)

Bloor and Dawson also found that these various subcultures had a greater or lesser potential for change under different levels of organizational stability, with cultural change being far more likely under unsettled or turbulent organizational environments.

Professional Subcultures in Secondary Schools

In the past few years, researchers have begun to attend to differences in the ways subcultures within schools bring meaning to their work. Such subcultures can be based on a number of variables; academic discipline/department, career stage, and ideology/response to change.

Siskin's (1991) case study of a high school describes professional subcultures as following distinct academic departmental lines:

> (Teachers identified) themselves as members of a professional network with strong ties outside the school; they speak as members of a community defined not by space but by subject. . . . they spoke distinct languages and used references in specialized ways,

> according to their subject speciality. . . (and also) resulted in different responses to the same external policies (pp. 142, 143, 144).

Siskin concludes that high school departments are fundamental boundaries forming distinct subcultures within a school.

Grossman and Stodolsky (1994, 1995) also document the subcultural division of secondary schools along department lines.

> . . . schoolteaching is not schoolteaching is not schoolteaching. The work of teaching depends greatly on the specific grade level; the particular subject matter; the school's organization, mission, culture, and location; and the district, state, and national contexts in which teaching and learning occur. . . . Elementary school teaching differs dramatically from high school teaching in its organization; even within high schools, however, teachers may perceive their job differently depending on the particular courses they teach. (1994, p. 180)

In fact, these researchers believe that "the importance of subject matter as a context for teaching can help explain why math teachers who teach at different schools may share more common perspectives on teaching than math and English teachers at the same school" (1994, p. 180). By defining subject matter discipline as the key subcultural organizer within a secondary school, Grossman and Stodolsky assert that these subcultures organize and define, to a great extent, the experiences and world views of high school teachers.

Hargreaves (1986) relates the concepts of a teacher's personal biography, the perspectives by which she makes sense of the world, and her career path to the specific occupational culture to which she belongs. Each of these occupational cultures possesses "its own socially approved ways of thinking, feeling, acting and believing in relation to educational matters" (p. 139). Hargreaves asserts:

> . . . it should be clear that a sound grasp of the close associations between teachers' careers, cultures, biographies and perspectives is crucial to understanding the problems of staff recruitment and deployment that schools face when they innovate or reorganize; the difficulties they encounter when they seek to establish new identities for themselves which cut across the long-established loyalties, traditions, cultures and careers of the staff they employ. (p. 139)

However, criteria other than academic discipline are also found to subdivide the overall organizational culture of a school, including lines of seniority and ideology (Erickson, 1987) and

reaction to change (Hargreaves, 1986; Corbett, Firestone, & Rossman, 1987; Muncey & McQuillan, 1992).

Corbett, Firestone, and Rossman (1987) identify high school subcultures that were only partially based upon subject area/departmental lines. They categorize these professional groups into four categories:

> 1) "Academic": These teachers felt that their fields had an intrinsic compelling appeal and enjoyed working on the more challenging curricular issues.
>
> 2) "Balanced": Teachers who were interested in their subject matter, but struck a balance between this interest and focus on their students.
>
> 3) "Vocational": Teachers in the "applied" fields, who believed that their primary mission was to prepare students for the world of work.
>
> 4) "Psychological development": Teachers, across departments, who tended to focus strongly on student self-esteem and an understanding of appropriate behavior; they were most willing to adjust their teaching to meet individual student needs. (pp. 49-50)

In his study of British middle schools, Hargreaves (1986) found that two distinct subcultures interacted at the middle school which lent the school culture its particular characteristics; these subcultures originated according to whether teachers came to the middle level from either the primary or the secondary levels. In fact, "the recruitment of teachers from what amount to two separate cultures of primary and secondary teaching inhibits the middle school in its quest for a distinctive identity" (p. 140).

Muncey and McQuillan (1992), in their case studies of secondary schools attempting to implement the Coalition of Essential Schools' "Common Principles," found that

> . . . a "vanguard" of interested faculty voluntarily embraced Coalition philosophy and saw themselves, and were viewed by the administration, as "harbingers of the future." Their noninvolved colleagues viewed them quite differently, as the recipients of preferential treatment. They called the Coalition core the "principal's favorites" and argued that they had received all sorts of benefits. . . . Conversely, the teachers and administrators involved with reform saw a need for the support Coalition faculty received and expected that their efforts would eventually benefit the entire school. Further, since faculty involvement often entailed volunteering free time, involved teachers dismissed the label of preferential treatment. (pp. 64-65)

These differing perceptions on the proposed change (move to adopt the Coalition principles) created a "we/they" atmosphere within the targeted schools, effectively creating subcultures related specifically to advocacy or nonsupport of the change.

To summarize, it seems that professional subcultures in schools do exist, and may be highlighted when some type of change in the school is evident. Erickson (1987) suggests, furthermore, that these subcultural differences will be characterized during times of change by cultural conflicts.

> The point is that when reasons for conflict already exist between groups in society, cultural differences between them, whether the differences are large or small, become an excellent resource (and medium) for engaging in and escalating the conflict. . . . it is not the presence of cultural difference between groups that *causes* the trouble, rather, it seems as if trouble goes looking for culture as an excuse to start a fight and to keep it going. (emphasis in original) (p. 21)

Organizational Cultures, Schools, and the Phenomenon of Change

Since many elements of a culture are taken for granted, when a change challenges a cultural value, role, or norm, these elements become particularly illuminated. Louis (1983) contends that changes in an organization's technology, structure, or setting can disrupt or support its culture and can also foster new cultural developments. Corbett, Firestone, and Rossman (1987) view most reforms as attempting to change normative behavior without attending to the meaning of those changes for the individuals involved. Smircich (1985) contends that different views of reality are framed as "communication problems," but are more accurately caused by differing cultural (or subcultural) paradigms. Fullan (1991) believes that the *meanings* a change has to individuals is the ultimate key in understanding differences in resulting behavior, and that solutions to problems of reform must come through the development of *shared meanings.*

Swidler (1986) suggests that organizational cultures work very differently during times of turbulence -- "unsettled" periods -- from times that are more "settled." Bloor and Dawson (1994), using Swidler's thesis, suggest that

> . . . settled periods are those when the individual organizational member is able to achieve valued ends by using the cultural tools currently available, when goals can be achieved using the existing operating and cultural systems. During these periods, individuals and groups are more likely to accept the status quo as being the continuing social reality. . . . During unsettled periods, culture has a different part to play. In newly forming organizations, or ones which are undergoing challenge or change, cultural manifestations (such as rites, ceremonies, and ideology) play an important part in directly shaping action. (p. 289)

Specific to the current study is the intent to more fully understand what transpires among a school's subcultures during times of change. Ball (1987) reminds us that change in organizations almost always produces dissonance among member individuals or groups.

> The introduction of, or proposal to introduce, changes in structure or working practices must be viewed in terms of its relationship to the immediate interests and concerns of those members likely to be affected, directly or indirectly. Innovations are rarely neutral. They tend to advance or enhance the position of certain groups and disadvantage or damage the position of others. . . . In light of this, it is not surprising that innovation processes in schools frequently take the form of political conflict between advocacy and opposition groups. (Ball, 1987, p. 32)

The Bloor and Dawson (1994) model of organizational subcultures, which we propose as a conceptual model in the current study, suggests that subcultures may, indeed, operate quite differently during times of change. For example, members of subcultures may put aside their differences during times of perceived outside threat or opportunity. It may be only in uncertain times that people question what, under calmer circumstances, seems "commonsense." When changes are proposed by members of specific subcultures, they may be seen as threats to the values of other subcultures, who attempt to protect the status quo at all costs.

Bloor and Dawson conclude that the professional subcultural perspective provides a much needed explanation of adaptation and change in organizations. Such a perspective should enrich our understanding of the interaction between subcultural influence on both individual behavior and the organizational success of proposed school reforms.

Changing the secondary school schedule. A current major trend in secondary school reform agendas is the rethinking of the relationships between time and learning. In many schools, the redesign of the school master schedule has been implemented in order to provide "room" for different types of reforms: from curriculum integration to service learning to increasing the quality of relationships between students and their teachers.

Historically, American high schools have divided their school day schedules and school year calendars into six or seven equivalent period classes, with each class lasting for the entire school year. Little or no variation in this schedule has existed to accommodate either learner needs or subject matter differences. Proponents of alternative scheduling suggest that

"unlocking" the secondary school schedule by moving away from traditional six- or seven-period schedules, and dividing the year into semester, trimester, or quarter classes, can have the following benefits:

- Facilitates the use by teachers of different/more effective instructional strategies
- Students carry fewer courses, and their teachers, at any one time; similarly, teachers' student loads are significantly reduced, allowing for the concentration on the learning needs of fewer students at one time
- Opportunities are provided for more individualization of instruction
- Discipline problems are reduced
- More effective use of time, space, and resources is possible
- Improves school climate
- Net instructional time is increased (Carroll, J.M., 1990; Canady & Rettig, 1993, 1995)

Many variations on alternative schedules are described in the popular educational literature (e.g., Carroll, 1990; Canady & Rittig, 1993; Ernst & Vanikiotis, 1994; Reeder, 1994; Edwards, 1995; O'Neil, 1995; Reid, 1995), and include special advisory, career planning, or study hall periods on a daily or weekly basis. In all cases, the intent of the alternative schedule is to open instructional, curricular, and interpersonal options which were unavailable to schools with traditional schedules.

Research Methodology

A case study approach was used for this study in order to describe more precisely the nature of school subcultures and their impacts on attempts at implementing reforms in each school. The complexity of interactions among people and subgroups and the deeply held beliefs and values associated with attempts at school change demanded a long-term, in-depth approach (Boglan & Biklin, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Yin, 1985), such as that associated with case studies.

Two high schools in Washington were purposefully selected to provide descriptions of what we anticipated would be two very distinct organizational cultures. Both high schools were recipients of state Student Learning Improvement Grants (SLIGs) to improve student achievement; both, as part of the grant, intended to implement nontraditional schedules during the year of the study. Washington SLIG proposals were required 1) to address student learning goals as identified by the state, and 2) to be determined by a collaborative process involving administrators, teachers, and representatives of the community.

Amber Ridge (a pseudonym) was the single high school in its district with a long history; 23 of the 31 teachers had been employed in the school for at least seven years. At the time of the study, approximately 575 students were enrolled in grades nine through twelve in the school. We believed that such an organization would provide an entrenched culture where underlying assumptions would be predominantly unconscious, behaviors habitual, and the existence of professional subcultures evident.

Red River (also a pseudonym) was in its first year of operation, and the professional staff of approximately 45 was working as an intact group for the first time; approximately 650 ninth and tenth graders were enrolled in Red River during the year of the study. To the greatest extent possible, the faculty was carefully selected to establish an innovative, nontraditional secondary program. We anticipated that a developing culture and subcultures would emerge as this group implemented the carefully planned vision of the school, which included the implementation of a nontraditional master schedule.

Each of the researchers worked exclusively in one school. After site visits, we discussed many of the details of the cases and shared our analyses of field notes. Data sources for each school included: 1) social artifacts (e.g., student learning improvement goals, school mission, minutes of meetings, newletters, staff memos); 2) in-depth interviews with at least half of the teaching and administrative staff in each school; 3) observations of interactions in formal settings (e.g., faculty meetings, department meetings, workshops) and informal settings (e.g., staff

lounge, cafeteria, classrooms, hallways). Thoughout the year, 16 full-day visits were made to Amber Ridge, and 22 to Red River.

In-depth interviews were scheduled with staff members on a voluntary basis, usually during prep periods. At Amber Ridge, a total of 14 teachers and the principal were interviewed at least once during the year of the study; these staff members represented all disciplinary areas and included both members and non-members of the School Improvement Team (SIT). One of the researchers also attended nearly all meetings during which reforms were discussed. At Red River, 37 teachers, ten classified staff, five support staff, and two administrators were interviewed at least once during the year. A researcher also attended some meetings of various types during the course of the study. No requests were made of participants to tape record interviews at either school because of the volatility of many of the topics of discussion and to enhance an atmosphere of trust with the researchers. Hand-written notes were written in shorthand to capture direct quotations and transcribed as soon after interviews as possible, and verified for accuracy with participants.

Data collection and analysis were guided by concepts and models of organizational culture, school culture, and school reform, which were used as tentative guides from which to begin observation and analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The goal of data analysis was to identify patterns in the data that spoke to the effects of each school's identified subcultures on the implementation of the schedule, and additional school improvement goals. Data were triangulated to bring more than one source to bear on a single pattern (Denzin, 1978; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Yin, 1985). To increase the trustworthiness of the data, we consistently took transcriptions of data back to the participants, either individually or in small groups, for clarification and verifiability of information. And in an attempt to decrease the potential of personal biases throughout the data analysis process, we constantly searched for negative instances of identified patterns (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Finally, in reporting results, we have masked personally identifable characteristics when necessary to protect the anonymity of participants.

Findings: Amber Ridge High School

Amber Ridge High School (ARHS) is a school that hasn't seen a great many internal changes in the last few years. The small community that houses ARHS is described by its principal as "very intelligent, very liberal minded -- having very liberal thoughts" (Prin, p.3). In fact, most ARHS teachers admit being somewhat intimidated by the community and are concerned that the community neither appreciates nor understands what transpires in the school. Two teachers commented,

> Teachers feel the community doesn't understand what goes on within the school setting and they need to carefully select words when talking to the community. They are careful in what they let out of the school walls. (Tch,, pp. 22-23)

> . . . it was imperative that the staff be totally together and in agreement on [proposed changes] before any presentations are made to the community . . . otherwise we look disorganized. (Soc. Art., p. 14)

Although the vast majority of teachers have been at ARHS for at least seven years, the principal, Jo, and assistant principal, Fred, have served a much shorter tenure. The year of this study, 1994-95, was Jo's first full year as principal of the building. She moved from her first year as vice principal to principal in the middle of the previous year when the former principal left due to what Jo called "stress" and a "vote of no confidence" from ARHS teachers (Prin, p. 5). The district had also experienced a recent high turnover in superintendents and several teachers expressed frustration about this high turnover rate. As one teacher stated,

> This is the first year we have had the same superintendent and principal for two years in a row in awhile. These changes in leadership have been very stressful. (Tch, p.2)

The year was also Fred's first year as assistant principal. Jo was relieved to have an assistant principal because the preceding year, following her advancement to the position of principal, she was the lone administrator in the building. Jo said she liked Fred and described him as being "centered and perceptive . . . and open to telling the truth to others" (Prin, p. 6). She said that teachers "see him as having a job to do and doing it" (Prin, p. 6).

Jo is a strong believer in teacher empowerment, in allowing teachers to make decisions, to take risks, to be learners. She expressed openness to listening to different sides of an issue and

recognized that there was no absolute right or wrong answer to most questions. In one interview during which she described frustrations she had with the rigidity of certain teachers, she reflected,

> There is no right answer to questions. If I find that this doesn't work, I will share my mistakes with others. I will tell them it didn't work. It is okay to make mistakes. An absolute right or wrong doesn't exist. (Prin, p. 15)

Jo suggested that her staff could be divided into two extremely diverse groups of teachers that she claimed created dissension and made it difficult to reach consensus on almost any issue. She named these groups the "Liberals," and the "Old Timers" or "Traditionalists" -- who hung onto old ways of doing things. She also described a third group as the "Middles" -- teachers who could see both sides and had valid points to make, who basically "come to school, teach, and leave for the day. They do not get involved in issues too much" (Prin, p. 5).

After several interviews with several teachers, it appeared that, although each group was concerned about and dedicated to student learning, there were basic philosophical differences regarding what constituted an ideal learning environment. The Traditionalists expressed a pragmatic view and believed that structure and control were prerequisites to learning. The Liberals believed students needed the freedom to become who they are and to develop a sense of harmony with their environments by developing their capacities. The Middles' beliefs were somewhere in between these two extreme positions.

Envisioning Change, 1992-1994

In July, 1992, the principal at that time commissioned what he called a "Quality Circle Team," a group of five high school teachers (comprised of four Middles and one Liberal), to begin thinking about the future of Amber Ridge. More specifically, the Quality Circle Team was to "identify skills and abilities teachers should expect students to learn and what program structures would help them achieve this" (Soc. Art., p. 3). The Quality Circle Team held a series of three "dream sessions" in September, 1992, to which teachers were invited by memo to attend. The sessions were held at the home of one of the Liberals. At these sessions, attending teachers were asked to identify "dreams of what we would like to see happen" at ARHS (Soc Art., p. 3).

Although all teachers were notified of these meetings, several teachers reported that they did not know what these sessions were and did not attend. In any event, six "themes" emerged from these dream sessions: climate, teaming, assessment, technology, structure of day, and student outcomes.

In October, 1992, committees were established to research each theme, and teachers were encouraged to sign up for a research committee. Interviews with teachers about this research process indicated that they tended to value most what was being done in other schools, because this was "what was current." This was a preferred way to learn rather than reading literature or empirical research; they also valued their personal philosophies more than the philosophies of "experts." Teachers expressed the importance of locating ideas from this research process that were practical, quick, and efficient. Little documentation was available that described the results of the various research committees' efforts.

In January, 1993, after the research committees had already begun their work, the Quality Circle Team asked the PTA to identify five to six parents to join them, and to have their own "dream sessions." During the dream sessions with parents, teacher Quality Circle Team members expressed frustrations that parents did not

> . . . have a good grasp of what it was like to work with students on a six-hour basis. The parents needed to be educated prior to the dream sessions so they could come up with realistic dreams. (Tch, p. 6).

No changes were made in the six themes as a result of parental input, and no students were invited to these dream sessions. These themes were later reconfigured into five goals for the Student Learning Improvement Grant (SLIG) proposal.

A primary motivating factor that pushed the school to create a reform goals was the availability of SLIG monies for schools in the state. The six themes identified during the dream sessions were collapsed into five SLIG goals: 1) to change the class schedule and structure of the school day for two days each week; 2) to use technology as a learning tool; 3) to move towards interdisciplinary learning; 4) to look at alternative forms of student assessment; and 5) to create a positive climate for students. The grant outlined a three-year process for implementing these

changes. For the first year (1992-93), teachers were to conduct research on the five goals, gathering ideas on what should be done; the second year (1993-94), teachers were to plan for implementation; and during the third year (1994-95), the school was to implement the plan. At the time the SLIG proposal was written, the Quality Circle Team was renamed as the School Improvement Team (SIT).

Students' voices were not seriously considered during the process of envisioning the future of ARHS. It wasn't until after the SLIG proposal had been granted that students were asked to speak. A Student Wisdom Council, comprised of 16 randomly-selected students representing all grade levels, was established in the Spring, 1994, "to analyze what was wrong with school, and to brainstorm some possibilities of how to fix it" (Soc. Art. p. 4). The list of suggestions made by the Council, however, were not incorporated into any future decision-making processes because of concern on the part of many teachers that students might gain too much control and, if that happened, teachers would lose respect in the school. Several teachers mentioned that students in ARHS no longer respected teachers and identified this as a major problem. One teacher complained:

> Students question teachers' authority. Students make decisions rather than teachers making hard calls. We are hired to make decisions, not students. . . . Students have good opportunities for decision making through student government and in other ways, but we aren't going to take our total direction from students. (Tch, pp. 34-35)

During the 1993-1994 school year, the year of planning, the SIT developed a five-year plan for restructuring the school. This plan was submitted for community input in February, 1994; however, there are no records of community responses to the plan. The guiding principles stated in this plan included:

1) Safety, trust, nurturing, and respect should pervade the school environment;

2) Programs and activities should be varied, and inclusive;

3) Students will be taught and expected to assume increasing responsibility for improving and assessing the quality of their learning;

4) Everyone has an opportunity to be involved in decision-making and to influence decisions that affect them;

5) The skills of listening, thinking, reading, writing, speaking, and problem solving will be part of the organized curriculum in all school activities;

6) Required skill levels will be defined and students must meet those skills levels for academic advancement; and

7) A comprehensive evaluation system will assist students, colleges and employers in understanding the students' strengths and weaknesses, and will assist and guide the students' educational activities (Soc. Art, pp. 35-36).

The five-year plan included a list of activities to be completed during each of the five years, beginning with the 1993-1994 school year. The first year of implementation was to occur during the 1994-1995 school year.

Implementing the Reforms, 1994-95

The ARHS restructuring plan included several activities that were to be completed during the 1994-1995 school year -- activities that would lead toward accomplishment of the SLIG goals:

1) Formally adopt skill level requirements for assessment purposes;

2) Faculty in-service sessions learning about new technology;

3) Continue exploring new or more effective assessment strategies;

4) Continue site visits;

5) Continue to collect data on student attitudes toward school and on student achievement;

6) Continue to develop and plan implementation of recommended schedule options;

7) Implement full Internet and E-mail network;

8) Implement new video production and broadcast media programs; and

9) Increase use of interdisciplinary courses (Soc. Art, p. 37).

Interestingly, the change in the school schedule is not listed as an activity to be implemented during the 1994-95 year, even though this was a SLIG goal and was the most dramatic, obvious change made during this year. The schedule change occurred two days per week. On Thursday, classes were held for periods 1, 3, and 5, and on Friday, classes were held for periods 2, 4, and 6, each for 110 minutes. All six periods met on Monday through Wednesday for 55 minutes each. This schedule was maintained for the entire year.

Time was reserved for teachers to accomplish the ARHS restructuring plan for the school year in a two-day meeting in August and eight "late-start" meetings scheduled throughout the school year; the SLIG monies provided financial support for these meetings. Teachers had voted at a previous faculty meeting to have the late-start meetings structured to include both small and large group work, with the small group membership being designated by teacher choice, by departments, or by SLIG committees -- depending on what made sense given the tasks to be accomplished. Agendas for these meetings were to be established by the SIT members.

The two-day meeting held in August focused on the schedule change and curriculum mapping for integration of curricula. During the first day, teachers from a nearby school district were invited in to talk about what they had experienced and learned from a schedule change they had made the prior year. During this presentation, ARHS teachers seemed rather subdued and few asked questions. Jo reported her own reaction to this presentation, and predicted that others were sharing a similar experience:

> I feel like I feel when I am going on a trip. I feel uneasy, nervous. But once I get on the plane, things are O.K. This new experience is the same" (Prin, p. 3).

Jo led the second full day and focused on integrating the curricula. She addressed the topics of multiple intelligences and curriculum mapping and had prepared several overheads, but did not spend a great deal of time going over them. She recalled, during her presentation, that she asked herself, "Am I preaching to the choir?" (Prin, pp. 3-4). Afterwards, teachers broke into smaller groups to apply the information Jo had given them. Comments overheard from several teachers as they were leaving to do small group work indicated that Jo was not "preaching to the choir" at all; in fact, many teachers reported that they did not understand either multiple intelligences or curriculum mapping.

An early awareness that relationships among teachers in the school were strained came when one SIT member announced that she would host a dinner party at her home following this second full-day session as a way of celebrating what was to come during the ensuing school year. When Jo asked, during the meeting, how many teachers were planning to attend this party, only

two teachers raised their hands; both were SIT members. The party was later cancelled due to lack of interest.

School began early in September for students. The September and October late-start meetings had extremely busy agendas; SLIG goals covered on these agendas included a technology update report, integrating the curriculum through curriculum mapping, and alternative assessment (portfolio assessment process). Information covering integrating the curriculum and portfolio assessment, however, was sparse; and, again, teachers seemed confused as to what they were to do when they finally divided into small groups.

Following the October late-start meeting, "all hell broke loose." Several teachers complained that nothing was being done during the late-start meetings and that no progress was being made; as a result, all SIT members resigned. In their place, a new SIT was nominated by the faculty, a change painful to many members of the initial SIT. The new SIT demanded more decision-making powers, in excess of what they perceived the previous SIT had held; in addition, they requested that the school's administration not participate in the SIT. The principal's response was, "There is no way I will not attend the SIT meetings and not be part of the decision-making process" (Prin. p. 7). The principal remained a member of the SIT. Further, members of the SIT asked to meet with the district superintendent to make sure it had power to make decisions. The SIT was informed that they could make decisions, but these decisions needed to have certain boundaries because ultimately the school principal was accountable to the superintendent and to the Board.

The November late-start meeting was chaired by Jo because the new SIT was still in the process of determining its decision-making power. She talked about goal setting for the next school year and asked teachers break up into small groups to identify where they wanted to be in a year's time. One small group was extremely upset having to do this exercise; one teacher stated,

> This is a ridiculous activity because how many times has this been done before and nothing is ever done. Nothing ever really changes (Late Start, p. 54).

The new SIT led the next late-start meeting in January. To accomplish something quickly, the new SIT asked teachers to get into small groups and identify problems they perceived existed in

the school, and then to identify possible solutions and recommendations for action. The SIT summarized papers submitted by the various small groups and concluded that four areas needed immediate attention from faculty at ARHS: the core curriculum, the use of space and space allocation, campus climate, and school-to-work transition. The SIT asked teachers to sign up for at least one committee to address these areas. The February and March late-start meetings continued with this work as committees were to come up with proposals for resolving problems.

Interestingly, only two areas that related to the SLIG goals were school climate and "core." "Core" replaced "integration" because the term "integration" was considered to be "out." Teachers in a small group session talked about the word "core" and were not sure what it meant. But they continued to use it as though it was understood. They laughed at the fact that this was "another new term." However, teachers in this small group session talked positively about the new SIT because they were "getting things done." One teacher commented,

> We need quick success. We need to choose a problem first of all that we can identify quick solutions that are doable now. We will not consider problems at this point that will take too long of a process, like curriculum review. (Soc.Art, p. 10)

By the end of the 1994-95 school year, only two of the five SLIG goals had been accomplished -- changes pertaining to technology and implementation of the new schedule. One teacher was responsible for developing technology in the school; she did not work closely with other teachers in the building and had district resources necessary to complete her job. The schedule change occurred because all teachers had to participate once the majority of teachers had voted to try it out. Although teachers had to follow this new schedule, few changes occurred in how most taught their classes, with the exception of a few who used the extra time for lab work and field trips.

Teachers could not get a grasp on the campus climate goal because of a lack of consensus as to what constituted "climate." As one teacher on the climate committee explained:

> Nothing very much happened. There were opposites on this committee and they spent most of the time arguing and positioning themselves at extreme ends of the continuum. I wanted to get a definition of climate. To a degree it was defined, but it was a very broad definition [which didn't mean anything]. (Int. p. 18)

In other words, the school climate resulted in a battle between the Liberals and the Traditionalists.

Regarding the other goals, any theming/teaming was conducted on a limited basis, with teachers getting together more because they felt they could get along with each other, rather than because of subject areas taught. Alternative ways to assess student progress were mentioned at only one meeting during the 1994-1995 academic year. To some extent, the lack of progress in implementing intended reforms occurred because of subcultures that emerged during the year and the role they played in diverting attention from these intended changes.

ARHS Professional Subcultures

The model of organizational subcultures as delineated by Bloor and Dawson (1994) was used in this study to describe differing attachments to the vision of reform, rather than to occupational groups (i.e., counselors, science teachers, support staff, etc.). At ARHS, five additional subcultures emerged in relation to the reform agenda from the existing Liberals, Middles, and Traditionalists and positioned themselves relative to the dominant subculture (which symbolized the reform goals). Using Bloor and Dawson's framework, these six subcultures included:

1) the dominant subculture;

2) an enhancing subculture comprised of Middles;

3) another enhancing subculture comprised of one Middle;

4) an orthogonal subculture comprised of Middles;

5) a second orthogonal subculture, comprised of Liberals, that moved into a counterculture position; and

6) a counterculture comprised of Traditionalists.

Many of these subcultures gained strength by focusing blame for problems that existed in the high school on the principal. Actually, it was this blaming focus that provided a sense of unity among the orthogonal and countercultures. Members in three of the six subcultures perceived principal leadership to be weak, providing no direction. The assistant principal, however, was seen by all

subcultures as doing a good job of enforcing rules to increase attendance in classes and to decrease discipline problems. Following is a description of the six subcultures.

1) The Reformers (dominant subculture). The dominant subculture is that which was sanctioned and supported by the district through allocation of resources and organizational legitimacy; the primary defining factor of the dominant subculture was the SLIG. Initial members of this dominant subculture included the school principal, the assistant principal, and initially, members of the first SIT. These individuals believed in the SLIG goals and pledged to work towards their accomplishment.

2) The Peace-at-Any-Pricers (enhancing subculture). This subculture was comprised of Middles who supported the core values espoused by the dominant culture and attempted to keep peace with administration and colleagues. They did not feel comfortable with conflict and avoided it whenever possible. These members did not spend a great deal of time talking about or planning what they were going to do as a subculture; rather, they kept to themselves. They came to work, they taught, and they went home. However, they were serious about their work and had strong desires to have changes in ARHS be a success. One member of this group spoke positively about the leadership in the school and the change process:

> Current change is atypical because usually change was dictated by the central office. So our involvement in this change process has been very different. The school has been more open, whereas before, we had no input. Personally, I feel that the more open we are, the more involved we are, the more committed we are to the change. (Tch. p. 2)

Another member of this subculture had been a teacher in the building for many years and had served on the Quality Circles group and the initially ousted SIT. However, she did not express regret over the ousting; instead she claimed,

> It is good to change the committee because we are in a new place in the change process and SIT is taking a different perspective and people are becoming aware of the vulnerable position committee members are in. . . . faculty want to see some progress. . . and new people can give new ideas, a new combination of people create new ideas" (Tch, p. 21).

Another member of this subculture remained supportive of change efforts in the school even though she had not been asked to join a theme team and saw herself as being "out of the loop".

(Tch, p. 8). She did express some regret that this teaming had not occurred and probably would not happen in the future, but did not appear to let this get in the way of continuing to do her job.

3) The Techno Wiz (enhancing subculture). This subculture was comprised of one teacher who worked independently, did her work, and did not get involved in the emotional upheavals which characterized the rest of the staff. She was responsible for the technology SLIG goal and had been provided a budget from the district to purchase hardware and software to accomplish this goal. Her task during the 1994-95 year was to set up networking in the schools across the district and she had established a "tech team" of 30 high school students to assist in the project. Other teachers in the building appeared to have a high level of confidence in this teacher. She observed,

> The faculty has been very supportive of me. They see I make things happen. This is not because of me but there has been money to support technology. It is easy to get things done when there is money. (Tch, p. 14)

This teacher updated the staff with periodic reports during faculty meetings and late-start meetings. Her reports were clear, concise, and usually praised by other faculty members. This response was unique within the ARHS culture.

4) The Movers (orthogonal subculture). This subculture supported the school's reform agenda as embodied in the SLIG goals, but became frustrated with the fact that "nothing was being accomplished" and the same problems continued to surface over and over again. This subculture wanted problems solved once and for all. Members of this subculture became upset with the way the first SIT handled the late-start meetings because they could see no progress being made. It was from this subculture that members of the new SIT came, with the mission of charting a different course to obtain faster results. A strong work ethic was important to this subculture:

> I am very frustrated with the large amount of time spent on doing tasks that end up not coming to any fruition. We end up losing motivation. I believe in the old work ethic that we owe our employer a good day's work. . . . the new SIT needs to have backing from administration, and more than verbal backing. . . . . In this school we have a fractionalized staff and there is a lack of clear administrative directions. (Tch, pp. 27-28)

Another member of this subculture expressed frustration with what was happening with the change process, claiming that teachers were not solving the real problems in the school; rather, they were

> . . . throwing scheduling at problems. This is like throwing "progressive action" into programs, and it is a matter of consequence. We use buzz words -- speak in "upspeak" language. It is an epidemic here. . . . . We need a monstrous enema and get at what is really meaningful -- relationships. (Tch, p. 19)

5) The Anarchists (counterculture): Although this subculture has existed for years in the school, it became more active during the 1994-95 year in its attempts to make sure "justice was done" and that teachers, as well as students, were given the "freedoms they deserved." Initially, this subculture supported the SLIG goals, and originally would have been defined as an orthogonal subculture. However, they too became frustrated that "nothing was being accomplished." When the original SIT resigned, this subculture became angrier and more critical of the school principal and of other teachers in the building. As a result, they began to take things in their own hands and began to do what they thought needed to be done -- on their own terms, regardless of what others thought, and whether or not their actions were in accordance with either school goals or district policy.

Members of this subculture met privately in each others' home to do their planning. They wanted to create a new school for seniors, completely separate from the current high school. One teacher stated,

> We got together last night to talk about taking over the entire 12th grade class. I think we agree that we want to create a new school, a charter school. We then talked about how we are not police. We don't like to force students and to police them. Policing subverts basic relationships between teachers and students. . . . District policy is not the most important consideration. The most important consideration is the education of kids. If they don't want to give us time to talk, fine. We will meet on Saturday mornings. (Tch, pp. 10, 12)

Another member of this subculture, and a member of the initial SIT, explained why she resigned:

> [I resigned because] no significant changes have been made to the concept of high school, to the curriculum, or to the delivery system, except block periods on two days. Big whoop. I am tired of waiting for change to happen. I have found this year the most frustrating ever. I am tired of dealing with people who do not understand how ineffective public education is. . . A major paradigm shift has to occur before a new school system can begin to grow and be nurtured, and I don't think such a shift is possible with our current staff. An earthquake as large as the one in Kobe, Japan, needs to hit our staff. . . . (Tch, p. 32)

6) The Authoritarians (counterculture). This subculture complained that the kinds of changes that needed to be made in the school had nothing to do with schedules, but with discipline. They advocated more authority on the part of teachers and school administrators. The notion of

empowerment and involving teachers in decision making was a waste of time, in their opinions, because kids were out of control and something needed to be done about it. They wanted the principal to show "some strength." Although this group did not meet secretly or try to overtly sabotage attempts at change (as did the Anarchists), this subculture spoke frequently and loudly in attempts at getting their way: they were unwilling to make or support any changes in the school until some sense of order was restored and policies followed. They believed that, should these things occur, the school would have no problems. They saw themselves as "right" and were unable to listen to different points of view.

One member of this subculture served on the climate committee. He defined school climate as following rules:

> (Climate is) how well staff gets along, how well they support each other. Climate also means how does staff follow district and school policy. We have a problem with climate in this school because we have different people who don't agree with the majority of faculty and they undermine the system and what other teachers are trying to do through students. They get to us by setting up students. When they do not follow policy, it makes people who do follow policy look like the hard-nosed teachers -- bad teachers. But teachers who do not follow policy take up a great deal of my time having to deal with it. The problem has really escalated in the last two years. I think it has to do with a lack of administrative support. We need that support. (Tch, pp. 33-34)

Subculture Interaction

According to Bloor and Dawson, members of various professional subcultures all seek to control "their organizational destinies" (p. 285), but differ in how they view those destinies and the means used to pursue this goal. This was certainly true with Amber Ridge subcultures. Some of the means by which this occurred are:

- using rites, ceremonies, and ideology to highlight specific subculture values;
- declaring overt opposition to decisons and actions;
- using "atrocity stories" (Dingwall, 1977) and other means which defend one's subculture against what is perceived to be unwarranted claims of superiority by others in the organization; and
- withdrawing from contact with members of differing subcultures.

At Amber Ridge (as in cultures in general), subcultures formed as attempts to make sense of either what was happening or what should happen, or to just get through each day. Three of the six subcultures (the Movers, the Anarchists, and the Authoritarians) consistently expressed frustration, disappointment, and confusion; they seemed to latch onto others who shared similar feelings as a way to find solace. The two countercultures demonstrated a low degree of connectedness to the dominant subculture or to anyone else.

The manner in which the ARHS subcultures interacted with each other created a sense of ambiguity about what needed to be accomplished and why, leaving many teachers feeling hurt by the ways people treated each other on both personal and professional levels. Ambiguity regarding where the school was or should be headed grew as subcultures defined and attempted to strengthen their positions during the year. Each seemed to be trying to pursue its own dreams: for example, the Movers' dream was to do something (perhaps anything) quickly; the Authoritarians' dream was to get things under control in terms of policies; the Anarchists' dream was to rid the school of policies in order to free both students and teachers. As friction between subcultures increased, little was accomplished on behalf of the school as a whole. Rather, energy was directed onto strengthening one's subculture's position -- which became the true goals of the year. This lack of unity was observed by several teachers, as one explained:

> There are differences of opinion and different ways of seeing things. This is not all bad. I don't want to sound too altruistic, although being a teacher, I am altruistic, but we have very good teachers in this school. For the good of the whole, for the good of the school, and students, I will be willing to sacrifice for the good of the whole. We need to do this. But the problem in our society is with the notion of being a rugged individualist. This can be a problem as there may not ever be any looking out for the good of the whole -- only what can please the individual. (Tch, p. 38)

The subcultures acted out their concerns and frustrations in many situations through passive-aggressive behaviors, which often appeared vicious. This behavior was not new to this year or to the reform goals; several teachers commented that this is "just the way things are around here." For example, during faculty meetings, some teachers appeared unconcerned about what was being said or would correct papers or "do something else." Others, although they would not say much or anything during the meeting, would exhibit nonverbal behaviors that indicated

discontentment. An occasional outburst would signal that a teacher had "finally had enough." Typically, teachers met outside of faculty meetings to plan their attacks on other subcultures or on the school principal. Many went to Jo to complain about her actions or inactions and about other's behaviors. One teacher described the situation:

> This community is a place out of the 70's. "Freedom" is still the call. There is a pseudo-free mentality. It is a status in the community. Teachers here are very doctrinaire, angry people. They really want to say F.Y. really loudly, but they don't. They say other things and it probably would be better if they just came out and yelled it. (Tch, p. 18)

Ambiguity was particularly evident in interactions between the subcultures and the ARHS principal. Jo knew she wanted to empower teachers, but what this meant in day-to-day living in the school was not clear. She had expectations of the teachers and of their behavior that were consistently unmet. Similarly, teachers in most subcultures expected her to make decisions and "show some strength," and when this did not happen, they were initially disappointed and later became angry. Jo described her frustration with the situation:

> I am coming to the conclusion that people don't know how to handle controversy. It seems clear to me that the staff needs training in how to work together. For some people there are long lasting feuds that still hurt. There are philosophical differences that need to be resolved. (Prin, p. 7)

At ARHS, individuation was more highly valued than community. There appeared to be withdrawal from anything truly collaborative; individual actions seemed ultimately related to individual self-interest and not to a larger collective unit. If unity of direction was sought, it was through calculation, manipulation, and the exercise of subcultural power, rather than through contemplation, expressions of vulnerability, or self-sacrifice.

Findings: Red River High School

Red River High School opened its doors to students in the fall of 1994. Located in an affluent suburb of a large metropolitan area, in a district of approximately 17,000 students, Red River was conceived to be a "nontraditional" secondary school in only the most positive, reformist

sense of the term. Its vision, as collaboratively developed and publicized throughout its community, states:

> Red River High School challenges all members of our learning community to make a commitment to quality education. Guided by democratic principles, our program fosters the development of confident, capable, responsible citizens. We achieve our goals collaboratively, establishing rigorous standards which engage the learner in the thoughtful application of knowledge. Red River High School instills in all, the necessity and the joy of lifelong learning. (Arts, 1)

From its conception guided by the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, the foci which guided the Red River staff and community in developing the school's initial goals included:

- All programs will be driven by students' needs in a personalized learning environment.
- All students will have equal access to opportunities for learning.
- All learners will work toward rigorous standards focused on students' intellectual, aesthetic and professional growth.
- Programs will focus on preparing world citizens.
- Our community will take responsibility for helping students prepare for 21st century careers and citizenship.
- By teaching, modeling and using democratic principles, our community members will learn respect for each other, and will take responsibility for the success of our community. (Arts, 1)

During its initial year of operation (the duration of the current study), Red River housed approximately 650 ninth- and tenth-graders. Adding a class each year, its projected size by the time of its first graduating class in 1997 will be 1500 students.

Shaping the Dream: The Planning Year

Dr. Monroe was hired in the summer of 1993 as the planning principal for RRHS. This was to be Monroe's first principalship, and he was hired from "the outside" over other in-district administrators who were seemingly "in line" for secondary administrative positions. Dr. Monroe's administrative background was in curriculum and instruction, and he brought with him a regional repuation for vision and innovation.

In October, 1993, the original Leadership Team of six faculty members was hired from around the state. This team of diverse, high-powered individuals shared in common, as did

Monroe, the desire to create a high school that would be the opposite of the "typical shopping mall high school" where "kids are lost and teachers are isolated from each other." Their collective vision was cemented with an early visit to a Coalition of Essential Schools training in November, and the digestion of a lengthy reading list of theoretical perspectives and research findings on state-of-the-art secondary education. Still holding full-time positions in other locations, members of this team began a dialogue (through evening and weekend meetings, telephone, and e-mail) about elements of the RRHS vision as they might ultimately be translated into programs, curricula, instructional practices, and policies for guiding students humanely and creatively through their high school years. Leadership Team members reflected on pieces of this vision as they saw them:

> The Leadership Team became cohesive because we had this massive thing to do. We only had each other to hold onto. (T22, 1)

> What brought me here was the clean slate, the opportunity to build something from scratch. I saw it as a culmination of all my 18 years experience and the knowledge I'd gained with my doctorate. (T23, 2)

In January, 1994, Dr. Monroe and the Leadership Team completed a first round of faculty hiring, using a comprehensive and innovative application process. This procedure was intended to result in the hiring of only those teachers who shared the reformist, collaborative vision for the school. A second round of faculty hiring was completed in the spring, along with the identification of "involuntaries," staff displaced at Washington High School -- the large, established "mother school" from which Red River was born. The three rounds of faculty hiring for RRHS (October, January, and April) were not without repercussions. A teacher remembers:

> When people left other staffs to . . . be a part of this school, old friends felt rejected. And joining a "nontraditional school" implied some rejection of the educational programs and philosophies in those other buildings. Some understood. Others had the attitude, "OK, asshole. Why aren't we good enough for you any more?" (T23, 1)

With most of the Red River faculty identified, June and July were devoted to intense curriculum development efforts, in part sponsored by a state Student Learning Improvement Grant (SLIG). These tasks consumed the month of August, with most of the new faculty working together the entire month on collaborative curricular and instructional planning, as well as the

individual and team planning necessary to begin school in September. Staff remember the summer months:

> I loved the days before school started when the staff came in early. Dr. Monroe brought in a lot of speakers. One I remember said that you have to look behind people's behavior to their needs. I believe that. It is so important to be caring. That's what we want this school to be. (C9, 1)

> The staff was really close at the beginning of the year. Lots of collaborating. (T13, 1)

The Red River program, as finally designed by the faculty, included the following elements:

- Assigned, interdisciplinary teams of teachers would share common offices and build their syllabi and lesson plans together. This element was intended to insure that "no teacher will teach alone."
- Subject area disciplines were grouped within and across the semesters.
- Both integrated science and integrated math were to be required of all students.
- World languages (Spanish or French) were to be integrated with other subjects with a focus on learning about other cultures.
- Seven career pathways were available for students to pursue. Elective classes were paired with other complimentary courses to promote curriculum integration.
- Technology was to be emphasized as a tool all students must use. The school was to open with networked computer systems and an advanced technology lab.
- An Advisory Period was scheduled to meet three times each week for 25 minutes. One certified staff member would meet with the same18-20 students for all of each child's four years in the school. One result of the Advisory was to be a six-year career plan developed collaboratively between the advisor and each student.
- A grading policy was adopted which required that every student reach at least "C" level in every class.
- No honors or accelerated classes were to be offered. Instead, students could earn an honors option in every required class if all coursework was completed with A or B quality.
- And (most importantly for purposes of this study), a four-period day was to be the basis of the school's schedule. Students would earn eight credits per year in four 85-minute periods each semester. (Arts, 1)

With these elements of the proposed structure in place, doors opened to Red River's first students on September 7, 1994.

Reality as Double-Bind: The School's First Year

For almost all Red River's new faculty and staff, the arrival of students symbolized the culmination, not only of the collective dreams, but of the weeks and months of relentless, demanding work which had continued, at least by some, since the school's inception. It would be fair to characterize the staff, at the time of the school's opening, in various stages of exhaustion, but functioning on a collective adrenaline high. In recalling those first days and weeks, specific staff members described "not knowing how we really did it," and "sleepwalking" through the unfinished details of the school's physical plant, policies, and curricular frameworks. Specific examples of the difficulties of the first few weeks of school included:

• curricular plans in every subject area which were based on the integration of technology, but specific hardware and software had either not arrived or had not been networked;

• the absence of other "essentials" to implementing the curriculum so laboriously planned (e.g., no overhead transparencies, no texts for some classes, no connecting cords between classroom VCRs and monitors, lack of art supplies and equipment);

• lack of completion of telephone connections, necessitating all calls to go through the school's main office, which paralyzed the few working phone lines;

• "inappropriate placement" of some students which seemingly ran counter to "the plan" as understood by teachers;

• some support staff positions still vacant; and

• the necessity felt by many to arrive at school extremely early (5:30 a.m.) and stay extremely late (9:00 p.m.) on an almost daily basis.

One teacher commented,

> It would've been nice on Day One to flip a switch and have the school go ON. So much still isn't right . . . . We're taking baby steps. But it's not as fast as I'd like. (T37, 3)

To discuss these early hardships, even a few weeks later, many staff members often seemed to romanticize them, much as a married couple recalls their first few years together as "poor but happy." The elements which seemed to temper all of these incomplete conditions were 1) the collective purpose of the staff, 2) an extreme degree of cohesion created by the collective ordeal of

readying the school for opening, 3) excitement over "getting to work with this group of talented people," and 4) the knowledge that these conditions were temporary.

Reality shock. An overlapping, but more serious, set of difficulties also emerged during Red River's first semester of operation. These conditions, in the opinions of many, violated the agreed-upon principles upon which the school was founded, cut to the core of individuals' reasons for being there, or had more than a "temporary" quality to them. For example,

1) Staff did not anticipate the negative, even hostile, reactions from students to the concepts underlying Red River's program. Particularly from the tenth-grade class -- which had been severed from programs and friends at Washington High -- Red River programs and policies "sucked." In many students' opinions, school started too early in the morning; the 85-minute classes were "a waste of time"; planned integration between two subject areas was "a joke"; the planned advisory period was "pointless"; varied extracurricular activities were too few; and expectations to take active responsibility for their learning (e.g., performance-based assessment practices) violated everything they had ever known in a classroom. Student misbehavior and "attitude issues," disruption, noncompliance, chronic littering, the appearance of graffiti and other, more serious instances of vandalism were met with a growing sense of resentment by the staff, particularly when they perceived inadequate administrative responses to these student behaviors. For example,

> I had a vision of responsible students here. I wanted to be able to put (art) materials out and let the kids just use them. I wanted them to use them responsibly and clean up and put them back. Wrong. They play with the squirt bottles of paint. . . These kids have not had experiences in learning how to be self-motivated. (T11, 1)

The cumulative effects of these student reactions was to deeply wound the very people who had labored long and sacrificed much in order to create what they considered to be a higher quality education for kids. The students were now attacking, not only the implementation of the dreams, but the dreamers.

2) In those situations where teachers contacted parents regarding a students' misbehavior or negative attitude, there was -- often enough to become an issue -- an additional hostile reaction to what the school was trying to do. Instances were cited, for example, in which parents did not

understand or support the longer class periods, felt that there were insufficient challenges for their more able students, or disagreed with the specific instructional strategies of a teacher -- and therefore condoned student misbehavior as a legitimate response. Many teachers began to feel that, to act in accordance with their understanding of the school's guiding principles, they would find themselves in conflict with a sizable number of their students, supported in several situations by the children's parents. In a school founded upon the concept of "partnership with its community," this proved a double bind.

> We made no provision for those kids who were failing half-way through the term. I guess we expected them to just embrace our philosophy, to see how student-centered it was. But those kids went home and talked to their parents, and their response was, "Hey, our kids are not your guinea pigs!" It has turned into a them vs. us thing now. Now what I see is that many parents have poisoned their kids' attitudes about us, and it is showing up in class. (T34, 1)

3) Traditionally, when things go wrong in schools, the response of most staff and faculty is to turn to the administration to "fix it." At RRHS, the administrators and the counseling staff were certainly working to ameliorate the effects of student-teacher, student-student, and teacher-parent conflicts; in fact, their days usually ran hours longer than those of teachers. Issues were handled on an individualized basis in which, rather than "laying down the law" regarding "how it was going to be" (although there was certainly some of that in more extreme circumstances), administrators and counselors saw their roles as teaching both students and parents the reasons for the new practices (a strategy attempting to prevent such conflicts in the long run) and to negotiate settlements to specific complaints (intending to personalize outcomes). Many teachers, even if they understood these responses intellectually, still felt emotionally violated when students returned to their classes "as if nothing at all had happened," "with smirks," or to continue the behavior which prompted the teacher's actions to begin with. In many cases, teachers viewed counselors and administrators as selling out prior professional agreements for the sake of placating influential parents. In week after week of recurring student issues, schisms began to appear and to widen among members of the staff, and between some faculty and administrators.

> Discipline has become a nightmare. . . . I have never had this kind of experience before. There is no back-up for discipline from the office. We have a restitution/contract discipline system and to some students, it means nothing. (T34, 1)

> There are absences and absences, because there is no attendance policy. After three months, we don't know what to do with those kids. (T34, 1)
>
> A kid pushed me in the hallway and threatened to beat the shit out of me right before Christmas. I wasn't supported by the administration. Nobody came in to see how I was, and I was very shaken. It was just before third period, and I had to go in and teach. My two partner teachers took over for me. This kid had been kicked out of two other high schools for violence and I was scared to death. He ended up being suspended for six days for doing this. But I felt completely abandoned by the administration. (T21, 1)

An additional issue became, in Dr. Monroe's view, the need to take wider issues to the staff for collective deliberation and resolution. Although this practice was in keeping with the school's principle of collegial decision-making, there was insufficient time now to both collectively process the growing number of "policy issues," and to just "get the day-to-day job done." In the absence of time for formal meetings, short hallway- and parking-lot-meetings between two or three teachers processed the issues and shared news of more "violations of the vision." As a result, the administration faced a double bind of its own: 1) to act in accordance with agreed-upon democratic processing of conflicts and risk increasing conflict and staff divisiveness, or 2) to resolve the issues unilaterally, from "the top" -- as many faculty advocated -- and violate the principles of collaboration upon which the school was founded. When Dr. Monroe referred issues to the staff, he was criticized by some staff; when he made decisions unilaterally or after input, he was criticized by others. As the year passed, Dr. Monroe's decision-making style became more and more an issue unto itself.

> The talk about what's wrong doesn't result in moving in the direction of solutions -- it's all talk. And that just adds to the frustration. (T34)
>
> There is no empowerment here for either staff or students, no real forum for input. The final decision is always Dr. Monroe's. (In one example), there was no staff meeting before the decision was made, no e-mail discussion of issues, no Advisory period meetings about it with kids. (T10)
>
> Dr. Monroe. . . is doing well. Some people make too big a deal and I see foolish gnashing of teeth over little things. I want to tell them it's time to grow up. (T8, 1)

The Leadership Team was, from both the direction of the staff and from the administration, the recipient of these issues. By winter of 1994-95, Leadership Team members had been "on the job" for a year without breaks and were all exhausted; they now found themselves the designated

"fixers" of everything that was going wrong. By January, the members of the Leadership Team collectively resigned, suggesting that the school faculty elect a "representative democracy" of its own leaders to continue in these formal roles. This change occurred, and two representatives from each of the four preparation periods were elected to serve as the Neo-Leadership Team. An about-face had transpired: a little over a year before, the original Leadership Team had been hand-picked to develop the Red River vision and participate in hiring the remainder of the school's faculty; now this team retired so that the entire staff could select formal teacher leadership of their own choice. As one member reflected,

> We had lost total credibility with the staff; mostly we were seen as a rubber stamp of the principal. Two members were actually reviled by most of the faculty. I think the reason was that they were unwilling to hear the human voices because of their sense of the vision. (T9, 3)

And as a non-member observed,

> At first I applied to be on the Leadership Team, but now I'm happy that I'm not a member. They've become the targets. I can say the exact same thing they say and can get away with it. My voice is heard differently. (T25, 1)

4) A fourth example of the serious difficulties of the inaugural year of RRHS concerned an external attack launched at the school during the late autumn by a small but vocal and politically influential group of approximately 20 parents and community members. These individuals clearly understood the school's program and curriculum, acknowledged its philosophical roots, and categorically rejected it all. These individuals, in most cases well-known, financially advantaged professionals, felt that academic standards were being watered-down by the school's program; that plenty of provisions were being made for "marginal" students, but none for the academically capable; and that subject integration and longer periods were seriously undermining their children's chances at admission to, and later success in, "the better" colleges and universities. Accustomed to having their opinions count in their own professional arenas, this group did not appreciate "the philosophical rhetoric" they encountered when they approached Red River teachers and administrators about these issues. They skewered the school with its own philosophy of community involvement in program development and decision making. They attacked individual school leaders in personalized and vituperative ways. They pursued one teacher in one specifically

integrated subject area until he left the school permanently (on medical leave). They rejected invitations to collaborate with groups or individuals in the school, instead advocating only immediate accommodation of the school to their grievances. When this accommodation did not occur, they took their case to the district administration, to the Board of Education, and to the media. Dr. Monroe reflected:

> I got attacked (again) last night in a community coffee. . . for taking on too much. Well, we haven't taken on half the changes we should be making, we could be doing a lot more. But the eight or so things we are doing are interrelated, they're hinged together, and I don't know how to separate one without affecting the others. That is, I don't know which reforms to drop to appease the resistant groups for fear of collapsing or weakening the vision. (P, 1)

A key district Board meeting occurred in January, at which the school was asked to make a progress report; the school gymnasium was full of parents and RRHS staff. The Leadership Team member who made the initial report remembered being challenged, interrupted, and heckled by members of the small community group:

> The ambush at the Board meeting cut right to the core of me. Those people laughed at my personal integrity and questioned my professional values and efforts -- it doesn't get any more core than that. Then my "fellow educators" and the "silent majority" of parents let it happen, which is another kind of betrayal. (T9, 2)

Although this community group did not represent all parents and community members, nor even the majority of them, it was sufficiently potent in its attack of the school's program to challenge its foundations. Paired with the internal conflicts regarding fidelity to the founding vision, many staff members began to ask new types of questions about their individual and collective involvement in RRHS. As one of the stronger visionary teachers remarked,

> There was just enough in what they were saying that approached the truth as I saw it, that I found myself divided internally. To agree with these hateful people at all would seem like heresy and betrayal of all I'd worked for and of my colleagues. Yet to ignore all their issues would be a more serious mistake. (T9, 2)

5) A final devisive condition affecting the school during its initial year was the individual and collective professional responses from elsewhere in the district, some of which resulted from antecedent situations. Notable exceptions to the norm were the supportive notes and telephone calls and passing comments from individuals to RRHS staff members which acknowledged that the school was experiencing a baptism of fire and urging the school staff to "hang in there." But

by far the most frequently mentioned reactions of other staff, either in other schools or at the district office, were less supportive or overtly critical of Red River. For example:

• Before the school opened, the district administration had been adamant that, once boundary lines were drawn between Red River and Washington High Schools, no exceptions would be granted to student petitions to attend the other school. However, what eventually transpired was that almost all such petitions were granted -- by far the majority in favor of student petitions to stay at Washington.

• Immediate competition over "the best" students began to occur at Washington long before RRHS opened, and was particularly evident with athletes, excellent musicians, and student leaders. The newly-identified, but still dispersed RRHS Leadership Team espoused a "no recruiting" policy, refusing "to put kids in that kind of situation," and thus felt that their potential student body was "raped and pillaged" before it ever arrived.

• Specific programmatic areas at Red River relied upon district-wide or other individual schools' cooperation. When such cooperation was reluctant or non-existent, feelings of resentment ensued. The Athletic Director became a pariah in the district's athletic community after his decision to blow the whistle on some of the athletic recruiting at Washington High. RRHS principal Monroe, already considered an outsider among district administrators, was further ostracized whenever he surfaced an inequity or a political issue; other principals "would sure like to help you on things that come up, but afraid we can't on this one." Counseling staff were continually chastised by their colleagues at other high schools for making it "impossible to deal with transfers in and out of the four-period day."

• When the grievances of the hostile parent group surfaced, other district staff began to complain that, if an upcoming district levy failed, it would be "Red River's fault." And when news of community unrest with the new school finally hit the newspapers and television, there were widespread expressions of "we told you so" and "they finally got their come-uppance."

One result of these overlapping double-bind issues was the growing futility among some staff of the possibility of ever realizing the "Red River vision." The cohesive culture of the school

at the end of its planning summer became increasingly fragmented into several subcultures, defined by their members' positions on how to resolve the double binds between the school's founding principles and the reality of their implementation.

RRHS Professional Subcultures

According to the Bloor and Dawson (1994) schema, seven differing subcultures were identified at Red River during the school's first year of operation. Membership within any subculture was overlapping and fluid, meaning that individuals did, at different times, identify with more than one subculture or move among them. The subcultures were more philosophically determined than friendship circles or cliques. With the exceptions of the Visionaries (the dominant subculture) and the New or Peripheral Staff (a deferential subculture), membership in these subcultures was not influenced by department membership or position, approximate age, or assigned office area. There were, on the other hand, some similarities among subculture members by hire-date cohort and prep period.

1) The Visionaries (dominant subculture): These individuals included the principal, members of the original Leadership Team (early in the year), and certain other members of the staff who were highly influential in either positions, personalities, or both. All of these members had almost a "personal relationship with the vision," so strongly did they believe in and attempt to live it. Although membership in this subculture varied over the course of the year, for the most part, members were highly idealistic and advocated pursuing the reform vision "above all other considerations."

> If we show people we have teachers here who care about kids, then they'll buy what we're doing. And we do have instance after instance of documented success already. I'm basically an optimist about what schools can be. Because if schools can't be good places, then I will also have to give up on a whole lot more of this society. If this doesn't work, an awful lot won't work in the world. (P, 2)

> . . . there's excitement in this. I remember the first thing (Leadership Team) did: the (Coalition) forum. I saw the possibilities. What I believe in, it can and it was being done somewhere. There actually were schools built around caring. . . . I have a rare opportunity to impact generations here. It would be selfish of me to hang out feeling negative all the time. I tell the kids, no one decides to be a leader. It's a gift, and you

> must take care of it. You must share positive energy. I refuse to dwell in negative emotions. One hundred and ten years from now, someone will ask somebody else how this school got started. Well, my name won't get mentioned, but I'm a part of that beginning. (T14, 3)

> I love the heartache of being a pioneer. You know, it's a struggle either way: you struggle with the b.s. of meaninglessness of what you've always had or you struggle with the unknown, the fear of inventing something new. I was so naive. How could I, at age 39, have believed we could have accomplished what we set out to do? Maybe that's what dreamers do. It isn't about pain and pleasure. It's something I've got to do. Writers have to write. Dreamers must dream. We are dreamers here.
>
> The only way schools or anything else will change will be belief -- faith mixed with a vision -- and the cojones to make it happen. (T27, 1, 3)

2) The Satisfieds (enhancing subculture): These individuals were supportive of the vision, but not at the same level of intensity as the Visionaries. Rather, enactment of the vision provided for them the context whereby they could implement their own personal visions within the scope of their jobs. In almost all cases, they were highly supportive of Dr. Monroe. These people were not as influential in the overall scheme of things as were the Visionaries. All in all, they were content that the expectations they had about working at RRHS were satisfactorally met.

> My expectations have been met at this school. I have a belief that all kids will be included and for the most part, it's happened. There has been great support from administrators and counselors. (T35, 1)

> Comparatively speaking, teachers have it easy. Yes, teachers work hard, but it's hard work everywhere. Look at businesses. . . . But one thing teachers have that you don't have (in business) is that when you close your classroom door, you're king. (T8, 1)

3) The Humanists (orthogonal subculture): These individuals were usually quite influential on the staff, and were highly respected by most of their colleagues. They originally supported the reform ideals of the school, but began to mediate between the Visionaries, in particular, and those who became increasingly disillusioned (the dissenting subculture). In some cases, people "did time" in this subculture on their way to other subcultures (dissenting or counterculture). In other words, members of this subculture modified their passion for the school's vision when they sensed that "people were being sacrificed for the sake of program." They advocated compromise of some original goals for the sake of "saving lives."

> Philosophically, I think every single staff member here would be against the idea of tracking kids into any kind of streams, but teachers are killing themselves translating this philosophy into practice. (T7, 1)

> We planned together last year and all summer, and then the doors opened and the dreams didn't work. The faculty was so optimistic that we couldn't conceive of it not working. . . . The positive thought is that there will be an end to the pressure. Not next year, not the first four years, but some time after that. I think most of the staff still has the vision. What's different is that many of us don't think we can make it to see the vision realized. (T13, 1, 2)

> Everyone puts on a public face that they wear, when inside every single one of us has gigantic doubts. I think many of us believe that if the human spirit is only committed enough, then the problems of the world can be solved. It's very painful to have that human spirit, and see the problems persist. (T23,2)

4) The Pragmatists (orthogonal subculture): A second orthogonal subculture was composed of individuals who also originally supported the school's vision, but felt that, in ways, it simply wasn't implementable -- either temporarily or permanently. They advocated sticking to the vision "where workable," but ultimately getting the problems solved through whatever means necessary. They were highly critical of the principal's "lack of decision-making skills" or "lack of backbone" when someone "obviously needed to be in charge."

> There is no basic structure in place, therefore anything else looks good. To make change, you cannot have everyone on a learning curve at the same time. We have the vision for change here, but no structure to support it. (T39)

> We got a letter from (the principal) saying there will be no changes in the schedule for at least two years. Well, that's not what we bought into. We bought into continual refinement to make things better. If the schedule has to go to accomplish this, it should go. (T31, 1)

5) The Increasingly Disillusioned (dissenting subculture): Members of this subculture, for their own personal reasons, felt that their expectations regarding implementing the Red River vision were not working. As the school's first year continued, the seeds of discontentment grew within this group, and members originally in other subcultures joined them. They felt the price for implementing the intended reforms was simply too high; they wanted the situation fixed or they wanted out.

> I don't think we'll lose a lot of staff after the year ends, but we'll have many who wish they weren't here, which is worse. These are people who don't have other options. I have considered quitting. . . What happens is you begin to question your own effectiveness in your job. . . . I haven't found my place here yet. In my last school, I found my philosophies, my belief structures worked. I have no credibility here yet, and until you have credibility, no one comes to you for help -- which is supposed to be my job.
>
> I don't have any ownership in the schoolwide or program development stuff. I'm full just trying to do my job. This summer, I just want to go home and quilt and not go to any meetings. (T10, 1, 2)

> At this point, I am very frustrated, to the point of detaching and eventually leaving after this year. . . There is a tremendous cost to doing what we're doing. (T9, 2)
>
> I would warn people who want to open a new school: it's important not to forget that staff members have families too. As teachers, we get angry when parents of our students are not available to their kids, but we're asked to do that all the time -- be here instead of available to our own kids. This job has taken so much time away from my family already -- for curriculum work, planning, lots of meetings. Many people are experiencing marital problems directly related to this job. . . sick leave is up. It feels like you're a first-year teacher again, every single day. (T3, 1)

6) The Fighters (counterculture): In the Bloor and Dawson model, the difference between a dissenting subculture and a counterculture is that, in the latter, members are actively opposed to the values of the dominant subculture. Fighters at Red River came from three sources: those who never accepted the vision in the first place, those who were having trouble in their positions as defined by the administration, and those who strongly advocated a classic "union stance." Although fighting the school's values in their own ways and on their own fronts, these individuals found each other and actively fed joint countercultural values.

> It's been hard from Day One, anything but fun. I don't like (the principal) and he doesn't like me. When I tried to become involved, I got slammed. I don't think he knows how to work with teachers. . . . So I'm left with: what have I done by leaving Washington? The principal liked me there, the staff liked me, the kids liked me. I don't understand how it could be so different here. (T21, 1)
>
> Because of my experience (30 years), I'm very different from almost everyone else here. (T33, 1)
>
> Someone has got to stand up to authority in the name of the kids here. (T3, 2)

At least two members of this subculture were often spokespersons for members of the Increasingly Disillusioned (dissenting) subculture and took seriously the responsibility of speaking up to the administration, or to their colleagues, on behalf of others who couldn't or wouldn't do so. In all cases, members of this subculture grounded their positions in professional values, professional prerogative, or both.

7) New or Peripheral Staff (deferential subculture): Members of this subculture, who were not highly cohesive as a group, were either part-time or support staff who deferred to the values of the dominant subculture, or they were new teachers (hired mid-year) whose survival was of paramount interest. In any event, what these individuals shared in common was that the vision

-- whatever it was or might have been -- was relatively irrelevant to just "doing the job." They were mostly individuals thankful to have a job, committed to doing well in it, and very cognizant of who hired them.

> I feel very separated from everything that's been happening in this school. I don't come to meetings, so what I hear is second hand from somebody, because I'm not that involved. (S1, 1)

Subculture Interaction

According to Bloor and Dawson, members of various professional subcultures all seek to control "their organizational destinies" (p. 285), but differ in how they view those destinies and the means used to pursue this goal. This was certainly true of the Red River subcultures. Some of the means by which this occurred are:

- using rituals, ceremonies, and ideology to highlight specific subcultural values
- declaring overt opposition to decisions or actions
- putting aside subcultural differences on occasion in order to meet a perceived threat from outside the organization
- maintaining and strengthening ties with significant others outside the organization
- using "atrocity stories" (Dingwall, 1977) and other means which defend one's subculture against what is perceived to be unwarranted claims of superiority by others in the organization
- withdrawing from contact with members of differing subcultures

More specifically, the Visionaries (dominant subculture) acted as the official and unofficial spokespersons for the school's reform vision. They were able to use legitimate organizational rituals (staff meetings, committee meetings, staff bulletins) to promote values and issues consistent with their position. They seldom openly or publicly criticized members of other professional subcultures, because to do so would have violated the collegial aspect of the school's vision. They tended to view as outside reference groups the network of Coalition schools and literature on reform. But wrapping themselves in the "ideological blanket" of the organization and its beliefs

also had its costs. Dr. Monroe and members of the Leadership Team became the visible targets, not only of what wasn't working within the school, but to hostile members of the community. In their opinions, they were shot at by, and took the shots for, the wider staff -- on behalf of the vision of the school. It is not surprising that some members of this subculture left it and either withdrew completely, or became members of other subcultures before the school year ended.

The Satisfieds (enhancing subculture) offered unquestioning support of the Visionaries and advocacy of the "rightness" of the school's vision. However, this support tended to be extended in quiet, less visible ways. Members of this subculture considered themselves strong and committed, but did not tend to take on the vocal critics in arguing values or ideology. The Visionaries could count on these "loyal footsoldiers," but the Satisfieds tended to act out their commitment through the channels of "doing the best possible job to make it work." They tended to view competing subcultural members as "whiners" or people who "just cannot cope with change."

The Humanists (one orthogonal subculture) tended to be well-respected by their colleagues. They were more apt to act upon their caring nature by confronting the principal or Leadership Team members directly, or in meetings, when a problem existed. They did not feel it was justified for Leadership Team members, for example, to be ambushed by colleagues or by external dissidents. But on the other hand, they also protested when a staff member's health or family situation suffered because of overwork, even for "a just cause." They were seen, and saw themselves, as people of integrity who spoke up whenever, and to whomever, it was necessary to rectify an injustice. And, at times, they saw implementation of the vision as creating injustice.

The second orthogonal subculture, the Pragmatists, tended to be less public in their discussion of problems or in their nonsupport of various "party lines" of the Visionaries. They were frequently critical of the Leadership Team and of Dr. Monroe for refusing to compromise aspects of the school's vision. Within their ranks, they tended to use "atrocity stories" a great deal to share accounts of issues and more desirable, but unused, potential solutions. They interacted successfully with the Increasingly Disillusioned (dissenting) subculture, because both were critical

of the administration; however, they also based their criticism of the lack of progress on their ultimate belief in the vision of the school.

Members of the Increasingly Disillusioned (dissenting subculture) tended to rely on identifying and strengthening ties with significant others outside the school as reference points. In most cases, these significant others were families (who did not understand why so much time and work were involved for the school) or colleague friends from former workplaces (often Washington High School) who reinforced that "it doesn't need to be like this." Atrocity stories were commonly told both within the subculture and to outside supporters. These people also tended to "just put their heads down, do the work, and get out when they can," resulting in withdrawal from all but the "absolutely required."

The counterculture at RRHS (the Fighters), actively opposed the values that were espoused by the Visionaries. They countered these opposing values either directly, privately, or through spokespersons (e.g., union representatives). Dr. Monroe became the major focal point of this opposition. In one case, it was speculated that a member of this group was "feeding" information to the hostile community group in order to "get rid of Monroe."

Finally, the deferential subculture (New and Peripheral Staff), to the extent that they were aware of any differences, tended to defer to the administration's position. Mostly, they were outside discussions of ideological issues, either structurally or by choice.

Almost all of the Red River professional subcultures (with the possible exception of some members of the counterculture -- the Fighters), drew closer together when attacked from the outside, either by others within their school district, or by the hostile community group. Bloor and Dawson also describe this reaction: "If there is a perceived threat of opportunity which can only be met by joint action, then subcultural differences may be put aside and cultural manifestations used to reinforce organizational cohesion" (1994, p. 289). When the external threats receded, subcultural conflicts again regained center stage. However, the refocusing of subcultural attention on internal differences after a "war with the outside" often witnessed the shifting of subculture memberships.

Comparative Analysis

The case studies of the initial year of intended reforms -- including the adoption of a nontraditional schedule -- at two high schools have centered upon the role of subcultures in the implementation of those changes. In comparing and contrasting the experiences of two very different schools, we have identified ten motifs we feel are critical to the understanding of what occurred in these schools during the course of this study. We have grouped these motifs into personal, structural, and political perspectives to clarify the effects each had upon the schools' experiences with change.

Personal Perspective

1. Personal pain. As researchers, we were struck by the obviousness and constancy of individuals who were hurting in both schools. The hurt was occasionally articulated, but more commonly it was either silently endured or assumed to be a professional cost of doing the job. In part, subcultures at each site tended to develop their own ways of talking about and dealing with pain felt by their members.

Of significance to the study of reforms in schools would be the high degree of pain felt by those in dominant subcultures when their vision of change did not seem to be working. The Reformers at Amber Ridge and the Visionaries at Red River seemed to have a level of fidelity to the reform vision which approached reverence and left little room for compromise. Members of these subcultures were essentially "married" to their visions of what schools should be, and often viewed differing perspectives on the implementation of reforms as infidelities and betrayals. In both schools, these members of the dominant subcultures were initially successful in having their personal dreams be realized by the collaborative acceptance of the schools' SLIG goals; when these same dreams proved difficult or impossible to implement, the pain was all the greater from the experience of the groups' initial adoption. During the course of the year, the principal at Amber Ridge was left alone as the sole member of the Reformer subculture, and at Red River, membership

in the Visionaries subculture changed drastically. At Red River, when members did leave this subculture it was usually to be welcomed into the dissenting subculture or the counterculture, not one of the "less extreme" subcultures. And in both schools, the personal pain involved in seeing one's dreams abandoned or devastated seemed to be a catalyst in the reactions of once "true believers."

Structural Perspective

2. The role of vision. Two very different parts were played by the vision of school reform at Amber Ridge and Red River. Basically, a clear vision of where Amber Ridge was headed never existed. Instead, different groups had their own visions of what the school should look like, but anything approaching consensus was never achieved. Several attempts were undertaken during the years immediately preceding the study, but a clear vision never resulted due to major differences in professional philosophies. More serious "vision work" was eschewed in order to avoid conflict internally on the staff and also to prevent the possibility that this professional conflict might become visible to the community. In spite of the lack of a clear, shared vision or consensual purpose, the school continued with implementation of the Student Learning Improvement goals -- which should have served as the *means* (e.g., a new schedule) to reach a higher purpose. This is a classic case of the phenomenon of "goal displacement" in the organizational literature, in which implementation of means -- to reach an identified end-- become goals in themselves and organizational members lose sight of overarching goals. It also serves as an example of Fullan's (1991) "bureaucratic" reaction to opportunities to change -- based upon the availability of resources rather than a shared definition of problems to be solved. At Amber Ridge, differing subcultures continued toward their own visions and agendas, and we are left with the impression that this would have been the case even if the Student Learning Improvement proposal had never been granted.

At Red River, the vision was clearly identified and widely shared and supported -- until the students arrived. And then it was the implementation of the multiple means identified to reach the vision -- the school's program -- that fractured the staff into subcultures. As Sarason contends, it

was a case of "a litany of good intentions colliding with intractable problems" (1991, p. 10). In this case, it seemed that a clear, shared vision was a necessary but insufficient condition to the initial year's realization of the Red River dream of a reformed high school.

3. The role of meetings. Staff meetings, although structured differently and embedded in radically differently contexts, led to similar outcomes at the two schools. In the overwhelming opinions of staff members at both schools, staff meetings accomplished little or nothing except to widen the schisms among differing subcultures. At Amber Ridge, teachers typically said little publicly in faculty meetings, and usually only on superficial issues. Meetings were often described as "uncivilized," and an openness to others' differing opinions was absent. On those occasions where an individual did emphatically express an opinion, there was no healthy exchange of feedback or debate that might provide for compromises or the cultivation of common ground. Instead, eyes rolled in a "there s/he goes again" expression of futility that the person would never change and the situation was hopeless. The Real Conversations occurred between whole-group meetings among members of the various subcultures.

At Red River, staff meetings had a more cordial tone, but still "didn't bring out the best in people." Scheduled in the afternoon after a long, full day, teachers who attended faculty meetings were more quiet -- probably due to exhaustion. Dr. Monroe saw staff meetings as "work sessions" in which professional colleagues could hammer out collegial solutions to mutual problems, or, according to one staff member, "all process and no product," which made members of several subcultures "crazy" (T 23, 5). Many of the more vocal staff who voiced opinions readily and frequently, would often delay adjournment by prolonging debate; it was this extended time element as much as the professional opinions that angered many of their peers. One counterculture member would frequently get up and walk out at the appointed ending time, no matter what was going on. Further, anyone who coached was exempt from these meetings because of conflict with team practice. Dr. Monroe would meet with these people before school on mornings following the staff meetings, a practice which didn't rest well with some others on the staff.

Staff members in both schools commented that, "If students behaved in class like we behave in meetings, we'd never stand for it."

4. Principal leadership. There were also many similarities to the styles of the principals in both schools. In both schools, Student Learning Improvement legislation required that schools receiving improvement grants decide upon school goals and means for achieving them through a collaborative process involving administration, teachers, and the community. The legislation was silent, however, on the issue of who was responsible for policing compliance with these collaboratively-set goals. Likewise, teacher contracts and professional standards did not address collegial support of collaborative agreements.

It could be argued that both principals possessed the legal right to direct teachers to comply with implementation of various aspects of the reform, once collaboratively agreed upon. But at Amber Ridge, such autocratic behavior would have violated the principal's values that true change had to come from teachers accepting individual ownership and accountability in order for change to be authentic. So the administration (the dominant subculture) waited for the teachers to move and the teachers waited for the administrators to move; as a result, no one did.

At Red River, the tension between principal- vs. collaborative-decision-making was a point around which subcultures differed greatly. Dr. Monroe was widely criticized for lack of strong decision-making skills by some, as too unilateral and autocratic by others, and as completely unpredictable by still others. However, he, too, espoused a philosophy whereby too much unilateral decision making would be a violation.

Both principals were obviously visionaries. However important this trait may have been to setting the initial direction at Red River and of attempting to build a coalition around school improvement at Amber Ridge, in both cases it was insufficient to ensure the smooth implementation of reform goals. In fact, it could be argued that the visionary traits of both administrators, in the absence of other leadership behaviors, exacerbated the situation once implementation of the reforms began.

5. Teacher leadership. In both schools, the formal group of faculty leaders which were, again in both cases, critical to the formation of the schools' reform goals, washed out mid-year. At Red River, the Leadership Team resigned because of staff hostility to their visionary stance, to be replaced by a faculty-elected representative body, the Neo-Leadership Team. These people represented several different subcultures.

At Amber Ridge, the new School Improvement Team, representing mostly members of an orthogonal subculture, "took over" the leadership out of frustration because nothing was being accomplished, and became adamant that change occur. After a group process of problem-identification, six areas of improvement were identified, none of which were included in the original Student Learning Improvement goals set at the beginning of the year, and none of which were accomplished during the remainder of the year. Rather, these new improvement goals represented separate subcultural agendas.

6. Issues of time. One classic tenet of organizational theory is that innovation will not occur in an organization unless "slack resources" are present (Morgan, 1986). Slack resources can be construed as money, time, or personal energy *in excess* of what is necessary for the day-to-day operation of the organization. The state Student Learning Improvement Grants were intended to provide the financial resources to create slack resources so that schools could decide upon, plan for, and implement goals related to improved student learning. In both Amber Ridge and Red River, SLIG monies were used to purchase teacher planning time -- at Amber Ridge in the form of late-start meetings and at Red River for collaborative program development during August preceding the opening of the school.

We were struck, however, about the lack of time during implementation to iron out both the predictable and the unpredictable problems which occurred. It was hard to identify any slack in the days of any of the educators we observed. It is probable that more than time would have been required to *solve* cultural problems in both schools, but certainly the lack of either individual or collaborative time on a recurring basis exacerbated those problems. We assume that the academic

and social press of life in these high schools is similar to the majority of such schools in this country, and marvel that successful implementation of reforms ever takes place in any of them!

7. The old and the new. At Amber Ridge, the change of schedules changed little else. Teachers indicated that they basically continued to teach in the ways they had always taught, only in longer blocks of time. Theming/Teaming was accomplished based on friendships, not necessarily based on student learning goals. Subcultures were critical of how others did or did not make pedagogical changes within the new schedule, but we assume that this criticism would have existed whether the schedule had changed or remained the same.

At Red River, many teachers accepted positions at the school in order to be able to utilize new and/or creative instructional strategies not possible within a traditional school schedule. In many cases, the innovative teaching which resulted was awe-inspiring. However, these innovative instructional strategies were not universal. Especially under the constant time and student-related pressures which relentlessly pressed the RRHS staff, even members of the Visionary and Satisfied subcultures admitted "relapses" into traditional, more "automatic-pilot" teaching modes. Curriculuar integration/"teaming" relationships were formally assigned at the beginning of the year, but became yet another source of subcultural differences. Many staff complained that such assignments *should* be based on compatibilities between individual teachers rather than randomly assigned to any teachers teaching in paired subject areas. Some stressed that curriculum integration and teaming were not synonymous.

Political Perspective

8. Collegial relationships and the role of appearances. In both schools, conflict existed among teachers interpersonally and subculturally. At Amber Ridge, camps were established and enemies named, and several teachers admitted that this situation was extremely painful for them. This conflict, however, was kept at subterreanean levels to "save face" professionally in the eyes of the community.

At Red River, these differences seldom erupted into visible hostility. Instead, most conversations about other colleagues were held within the confines of subcultures or between members of compatible subcultures. Outside threats necessitated that staff members keep up a cohesive front, not only to the external world, but also to each other, when the school was publicly attacked in an increasingly visible, widespread way -- by others inside the school district, by hostile parents, and by the media. Such "loss of face" created communal pain and became one of the few sources of internal cohesion available to the staff. It is interesting to speculate if "blowing the whistle" on the cultural dysfunction at Amber Ridge might have served a similar function.

9. The lapse into "political arenas": We believe it would be accurate to describe the cultures of Amber Ridge and Red River as highly political during the year of the study. Mintzberg (1985) describes organizations that become "political arenas" when they are "captured by conflict" (p. 133). In such situations, other systems of influence -- formal authority, expertise, or ideology -- have lost their ability to guide and control the actions of organizational members. In the absence of strong formal authority, expertise, or ideology which pull people together, political behavior (behavior that is neither formally authorized, widely accepted, nor officially certified) becomes rampant in the organization; it is usually "divisive and conflictive, often pitting individuals or groups against formal authority, accepted ideology, and/or certified expertise, or else against each other" (p. 134). Although Mintzberg is careful to delineate many functional roles of politics in organizations, he also describes how a political arena can be dysfunctional: "It is divisive and costly, burning up energies that could instead go into the pursuit of the organization's mission" (p. 148).

At Amber Ridge, strong formal authority was lacking; expertise was diversely defined and individualistically recognized; and ideologies determined divisions into the aforementioned professional subcultures. At Red River, formal systems of authority eroded over the school's inaugural year; dispersed expertise was seen as a professional "given" and leveler; and the shared original ideology of the school's vision dissipated into different implementation realities. In both cases, the schools became political arenas. Sarason (1991) well articulates this point:

> . . . the classroom, and the school and school system generally, are not comprehensible unless you flush out the power relationships that inform and control the behavior of everyone in these settings. (p. 7)

10. The role of professional subcultures in the change process. It was clear in both Amber Ridge and Red River that membership in subcultures met human and professional needs of both staffs. They did, as Bloor and Dawson (1994) suggest, mediate between individuals and the organizational levels of the schools. In both schools, individuals found the equivalent of philosophical "families" which provided the moral support necessary to sustain the stresses of teaching/administration and reform: of flying the plane and redesigning it at the same time.

It was also clear in both schools that membership in professional subcultures played a strong role in how far the schools progressed, or did not progress, in their reform agendas during the course of this study. Professional subcultures did provide frameworks for interpreting events and making sense of the confusion and stress inherent in the implementation of complex changes. And as Mintzberg (1985) predicts, when the school organizations became political, the subcultures became the battalions which fought the daily battles of implementation. In both cases but in different ways and to differing degrees, subcultural conflict disabled both schools' attempts to progress farther with implementation of reforms because peoples' energies and attentions were syphoned away from the cohesion necessary to achieve common goals.

Implications

We concluded this study with mixed emotions. On one hand, we were overwhelmingly depressed about the possibility of successful, substantive change occurring in these two high schools without real casualties involved -- casualties in human and social terms or casualities of the reform ideals we set out to study. We felt that we were witnessing the truth of Sarason's (1991) prediction that, if you accept the present structure of the schooling system as a given, and if you insist that those who seek to change it must do so within this existing system, you will doom any reform to failure. On the other hand, we were amazed and touched by the heroism of the people who were attempting changes that were essentially cultural, with all of the complexity that the

concept of culture involves. We wished, at times, that our own children could have had the benefit of learning from many of these educators. We watched at close range the extremely high costs to many people of implementing reforms they believed in, knowing only that -- for them -- the price of *not* working to improve their schools would have been higher still.

Professional organizations, such as schools, will probably always include differing professional subcultures. As Bloor and Dawson suggest, "(The) sharing of experiences and beliefs leads to the development and maintenance of professional subcultures which compliment, conflict and counterbalance the primary organizational culture" (1994, p. 291) This realization should increase the level of reverence even experienced "believers" in organizational cultures feel for the complexities of reforms in such places as secondary schools.

However, such understanding may equip us with additional insights regarding the planning, guiding, and comprehension of such change efforts. For example, it is currently customary for educational leaders to plan for reforms at one or both of two levels in schools: the organizational level and the individual level. Results of this study suggest that the subcultural level may also be critical for enhancing the potential for successful implementation of reforms. Continuous "reframing" of a change according to the values of a specific professional subculture may make a crucial difference in how the members of the subculture make sense of that change ideologically. This reframing may, indeed, render a potentially threatening reform more acceptable or legitimate to members of a specific subculture.

Planned change, as is well documented in many places (e.g., Fullan, 1991), is a political process, among other things. This study has described some of the ways in which different professional subcultures in two high schools sought to strengthen their positions and have their particular ideological visions realized. In most cases, it was members of the "less extreme," the orthogonal subcultures, who were most successful in this effort. As Bloor and Dawson describe orthogonal subcultures, they simultaneously accept the basic assumptions of the dominant subculture but also hold some assumptions that are unique and in conflict with the dominant subculture. The orthogonals may indeed hold an important key as "mediator" subcultures between

the dominant and enhancing subcultures on the one hand, and the dissenting and countercultures on the other. Historically, most of the attention in planned change has gone into the dominant subculture, which may, when analyzed culturally, be analygous to preaching to the choir. More attention to the pivotal role played by orthogonal subcultures may prove at least as fruitful.

Finally, in these two cases, when highly visionary, reformist staff members find their visions endangered during implementation, their "fall" is from a greater height than for others within the organization. At both of our schools, this phenomenon occurred. The pain of seeing one's vision fail, or worse, being ridiculed or rejected because of it, can create a situation in which only the very few will dare venture again. When these individuals no longer feel a part of the dominant subculture -- the keepers of the dream -- they can potentially become a reform's most dangerous enemies. We speculate how many educators have arrived at a place of cynicism from the experience of watching their ideals for change crushed.

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